



C. Herschel Schooley Papers (C4485)

Collection Number: C4485

Collection Title: C. Herschel Schooley Papers

Dates: 1901-1976

Creator: Schooley, C. Herschel, 1900-1985

Abstract: Biographical research material collected by C. Herschel Schooley in preparation for a book on Clarence Cannon, Democratic Congressman from Missouri. Also includes materials on Schooley's nephew, Harper Elliott Van Ness, Jr.

Collection Size: 3.0 cubic feet
(186 folders, 1 volume)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research but may be stored offsite. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at columbia@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *C. Herschel Schooley Papers* (C4485); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Columbia [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Columbia].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by C. Herschel Schooley on June 3, 1977 (Accession No. CA4078). An addition was made on June 7, 1977, by C. Herschel Schooley (Accession No. CA4078).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the C. Herschel Schooley Papers can be found in the following collections:

[*Clarence Cannon Papers*](#), (C0892)

[*Clarence Cannon Papers*](#), (C2342)

[*C. Herschel Schooley Papers*](#), Dwight D. Eisenhower Library (Abilene, KS)

Processed by: Autumn Cuddy, December 12, 2025

Historical Note:

Clarence Herschel Schooley was born on September 17, 1900, in Effingham, Illinois. His parents were Viola Hasbrouck and Ellsworth Bristow Schooley. He earned a bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of Missouri in 1925 and began working at the *Mexico Ledger* the same year. Schooley married Pauline Van Ness, a Mexico native, in 1927, while he was city editor for the *Ledger*, and continued his journalism career through 1936 with positions at the *Kansas City Star*, *Kansas City Journal-Post*, *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, and *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

In 1937, Schooley and his family moved to Texas, where he became a journalism instructor and Director of Publicity at Hardin-Simmons University. He continued his journalism work in the early 1940s, editing and writing for the *Abilene Reporter-News*, *Oklahoma City Oklahoman*, and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*. In 1943, he accepted a Naval Officer commission as Assistant Public Information Officer with the United States Navy Reserve in Florida and was promoted to Public Information Office in the Executive Office of the Secretary of the Navy in Washington, D.C. three years later. During this time, he concurrently served as Press Officer for the Department of Defense while completing his master's degree at the University of Maryland.

Upon graduating in 1953, he became the first Director of the Office of Public Information with the Department of Defense, serving under Secretaries Charles E. Wilson and Neil H. McElroy through the mid-1950s. Schooley switched to the Department of the Interior to serve as Director of Information in 1958, received a promotion to Captain with the US Naval Reserve in 1960, and accepted a position for two years as Press Secretary to Texas Senator John Tower from 1961-1963. Afterwards, he spent ten years as D.C.-area manager with the Independent Bankers Association and earned a second bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Illinois.

Schooley married Eleanor Haney in December 1973, following the death of his first wife, Pauline, in April of the previous year. From 1973-1976, he was a banking consultant and spent much of his free time conducting research for a biography of Congressman Clarence Cannon, following Cannon's death in 1964. Schooley retired to California in 1977, the same year he published *Missouri's Cannon in the House*, and died in San Diego, California, in 1985.

Harper Elliott Van Ness, Jr., was born in Junction City, Kansas, on July 2, 1919, to Ethyl Chew Stover and Harper Van Ness, Sr. Ethyl died soon after, leaving Harper, Sr., an active-duty US Army soldier, to care for their son, assisted by his mother and sisters, including Schooley's wife, Pauline Van Ness. At the end of Harper's teenaged years, Schooley secured him an appointment to the United States Naval Academy from then-Congressman Clarence Cannon. Van Ness earned the nickname "Smilin' Jack" while attending the academy, a reference to popular aviation comic strip, *The Adventures of Smilin' Jack*.

During World War II, Jack Van Ness served aboard the USS Landsdale for two years before earning aviator qualifications to fly the F6F Hellcat with Fighter Squadron 20 in 1945. After the war, Jack married Sue Palmer Anderson and earned degrees in electrical and aeronautical engineering. He retired at the rank of captain in 1969 after 30 years of service in missile testing and rocket development, including contributions to the Mercury, Gemini, and Apollo space programs. Captain Van Ness died in Maryland on March 20, 2007.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following 3 series:

Personal Papers
Research Files
Van Ness Papers

Scope and Content Note:**Personal Papers**

This series contains a sketch of Schooley (1927), the first draft of *Missouri's Cannon in the House*, and scrapbook pages of photographs and press clippings, 1940s-1976.

Research Files

This series contains research materials, notes, and correspondence which relate to the career of Missouri Congressman Clarence Cannon, compiled for Schooley's book, *Missouri's Cannon in the House*, published in 1977. The series is arranged alphabetically.

Van Ness Papers

This series consists of materials pertaining to the life and naval career of Schooley's nephew, Harper Elliot Van Ness, Jr., 1930s-1976. Included are a 1942 United States Naval Academy yearbook, *The Lucky Bag*, and a scrapbook of photos, news clippings, event records, correspondence, and other materials relating to Van Ness.

Container List:**Personal Papers**

- f. 1 Correspondence (A-H), 1965-1972
- f. 2 Effingham, Il. House Records, 1972
- f. 3 Schooley Portrait, 1927
- f. 4 Scrapbook, 1940s-1970s
- f. 5-8 *Missouri's Cannon in the House*, first draft, 1976

Research Files

- f. 9 American Farm Bureau Federation, 1924, 1941, 1946
- f. 10 Anecdotes, 1935, 1948, 1964, 1972
- f. 11 Appropriations Committee History, 1962-1964
- f. 12 Appropriations Committee Portrait Ceremony, 1971
- f. 13 Appropriations Chairmanship, 1941
- f. 14 Balanced Budget, 1948
- f. 15 Bamboo Pipestem Bill, 1960
- f. 16 Banks and Banking, 1932, 1933, 1956-1972
- f. 17 Biography Notes, 1972
- f. 18 Box Holder Letters, 1954
- f. 19 Brett Letters [with Cannon], 1960-1964
- f. 20 Sen. Frank P. Briggs, 1946
- f. 21 Omar Burleson, 1961-1962
- f. 22 Campaign Brochures and Couriers, 1924, 1952
- f. 23 Campaign Expenditures, 1928, 1942
- f. 24 Campaign Newspapers, 1948, 1952
- f. 25 Cannon, Articles About, 1940s-1960s
- f. 26 Cannon, Biographical, 1949-1964
- f. 27 Cannon, Biography, 1972-1973
- f. 28 Cannon, Chapter 8, 1963
- f. 29 Cannon, Chapter 12 footnotes, 1972
- f. 30 Cannon Dam, 1960-1974
- f. 31 Cannon, Death and Succession Election, 1964
- f. 32 Cannon, Early (1914-1919), 1973
- f. 33 Cannon, Election Results, 1922
- f. 34 Cannon Family Bank, undated
- f. 35 Cannon, Famous Exchanges, 1946-1963
- f. 36 Cannon and Floods, 1964
- f. 37 Cannon Foundation, 1958
- f. 38 Cannon, Ida Wiggington, 1901-1905
- f. 39 Ida Cannon Correspondence, 1969-1976
- f. 40 Cannon, Interior (BLM), 1949, 1973
- f. 41 Speaker Joseph G. Cannon, 1973
- f. 42 Cannon Letters, Final Days, 1964
- f. 43 Cannon Papers, Folder Notes, undated
- f. 44 Clarence Cannon Papers Index, 1972
- f. 45 Cannon Remembrances, 1964

f. 46	Cannon Research Notes, 1973
f. 47	Cannon Revision Matter, 1972-1975
f. 48	Cannon Volume Clips, 1972, 1974
f. 49	Catholic Correspondence, 1972
f. 50	Citations, 1954
f. 51	Champ Clark Clip File, 1925, 1973
f. 52	Champ Clark, Chapter 26-27, undated
f. 53-56	Congress Notes, 1972
f. 57	Pres. Calvin Coolidge, 1926
f. 58	Admiral Robert E. Coontz, 1935
f. 59	Rep. Bob Crossner, 1946
f. 60	Culver-Stockton College, 1957
f. 61	Death Honors, 1964
f. 62	Democratic National Committee, 1924, 1964
f. 63	Democratic National Conventions, 1924
f. 64	Democratic Party Caucus Procedures, 1957-1963
f. 65	Lewis Deschler, 1977
f. 66	Senator Everett Dirksen, 1969
f. 67	Eight Term Campaign, 1936
f. 68-69	Eisenhower Library Copies, 1972
f. 70	Pres. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Chapter 30, 1954-1974
f. 71	J. B. Ellis, 1924, 1951
f. 72	Elsberry Baptist Church, 1972
f. 73	Encyclopedia Britannica, 1959
f. 74	Eulogies, 1927, 1957, 1964
f. 75	Fafa, 1947
f. 76	Farm Erosion, 1944
f. 77	Farm Speeches, 1939-1941
f. 78	First Ladies, undated
f. 79	First Term Campaign, 1922
f. 80	Pres. Gerald Ford, 1969, 1975
f. 81	Form Letters, 1922-1950
f. 82	Genealogy, undated
f. 83	Bryce Harlow, 1960
f. 84	D. George Harvey, 1963
f. 85	Hayden Confrontations, Chapter 17, undated
f. 86	Sen. Harry B. Hawes, 1926
f. 87	Sen. Tom Hennings, 1952
f. 88	Historical, miscellaneous, 1914-1961
f. 89	J. Edgar Hoover, 1952-1964
f. 90	H. R. 8002, 1958
f. 91	Rep. William Hungate, 1974-1975
f. 92	Impeachment, 1973-1974
f. 93	Importance of One Vote, 1972
f. 94	Pres. Lyndon B. Johnson, 1960, 1964
f. 95	Lyndon Johnson, portrait, undated

f. 96	Sen. James B. Klem, undated
f. 97	Pres. John F. Kennedy, 1961, 1963
f. 98	Labor Support, 1956
f. 99	Library of Congress, 1973
f. 100	Library Notes, 1972
f. 101	Pres. Abraham Lincoln, 1925
f. 102	Sen. Ed Long, 1973
f. 103	Longevity Tenures (Missouri), 1964
f. 104	Chairman George H. Mahon, 1964, 1965, 1974
f. 105	Mahon, Chapter 19, undated
f. 106	General George C. Marshall, 1951
f. 107	Marshall Library, 1968-1971
f. 108	Marriage, 1906
f. 109	Admiral McCain and Son [John], 1973
f. 110	McNary-Haugen Bill, 1924
f. 111	Sen. Norman Mitchell, 1974-1976
f. 112	Loring Merwin, 1963-1965
f. 113	Military Efforts, 1918
f. 114	Minority Staff Post, 1921
f. 115	Miscellaneous, 1940s-1950s
f. 116	Miscellaneous, 1950s-1960s
f. 117	Miscellaneous Correspondence, 1924-1964
f. 118	Miscellaneous Speech Texts, 1909-1963
f. 119	Mississippi River Parkway, 1949
f. 120	Missouri Delegation Breakfasts, 1954
f. 121	Missouri Farmers Association, 1946-1973
f. 122	Missouri Greats, 1972
f. 123	N, 1963-1964
f. 124	National Farmers Union, 1952
f. 125	National Genealogical Society, 1963-1973
f. 126	Newspaper Clips, 1943
f. 127	One Horse Town, 1923
f. 128	One-Package Appropriation Bill, 1950
f. 129	Outlines (Early), 1970s
f. 130	Drew Pearson, 1960
f. 131	Prayers, undated
f. 132	Pixley, Ida Lee Cannon, 1937
f. 133	Postmasterships, 1935
f. 134	Quotations, undated
f. 135	Readers Digest, 1959, 1963
f. 136	Repudiation of 1958 Budget
f. 137	Romjue Affray, 1933
f. 138	Pres. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1939
f. 139	Saturday Evening Post, 1950
f. 140	Staff Rosters and Salaries, 1962
f. 141	Gov. Lloyd C. Stark, 1948, 1972

f. 142	Statements and Debates, 1917-1956
f. 143	Speech Chronology, 1924-1962
f. 144	Speeches, 1932
f. 145	Speeches, 1943, 1945
f. 146	Speeches, Political, 1955-1959
f. 147	Speeches, Press, 1929
f. 148	Speeches and Remarks, 1923-1952
f. 149	Speeches, Women's Clubs, 1958, 1959
f. 150	Rep. Charles Stedman Tributes, 1930, 1973
f. 151	Stephens College Years, 1905-1908
f. 152	Submissions to MU and Publishers, 1974-1975
f. 153	Submissions to MU University Press, 1975
f. 154	Rep. Leonor K. Sullivan, 1952, 1973
f. 155	Sen. Stuart Symington, 1975
f. 156	Sen. Symington Seat, 1975, 1976
f. 157	T, 1967-1971
f. 158	Reference: John Taber, 1972
f. 159	John Taber, 80 th Birthday Party, 1960
f. 160	Testimonial Letters, 1942-1962
f. 161	Rep. Maurice Thatcher, 1973
f. 162	Pres. Truman and Cannon Exchanges, Ch. 29, 1952, 1972, 1973
f. 163	Truman Library Photocopies, 1972
f. 164	Tuttle Creek Dam, 1952
f. 165	TVA, 1955, 1956
f. 166	University of Missouri, 1954-1959
f. 167	USS Missouri, 1948
f. 168	V, 1969-1972
f. 169	Voting Records, 1956-1964
f. 170	W, 1966-1971
f. 171	Women, 1912, 1940, 1949
f. 172	Westminster College, 1952, 1955
f. 173	L. Mitchell White and Robert M. White II, 1963-1965
f. 174	Rep. Jamie L. Whitten, 1971
f. 175	William Jewell College, 1948, 1958

Van Ness Papers

f. 176	Correspondence, 1960s-1970s
f. 177	Genealogy Materials, undated
f. 178	Photographs, 1940s-1970s
f. 179	Press, 1930s-1970s
f. 180	Miscellaneous, 1960s-1970s
f. 181-185	Scrapbook, 1939-1942
f. 186	Scrapbook, Photos, 1940s, 1960s
v. 1	<i>The Lucky Bag</i> , 1942

Index:

Index Terms	Folder	Image
Bankhead, John Hollis, 1872-1946	4	Yes
Birchard, Glen R.	4	Yes
Brucker, Wilber M., 1894-1968	4	Yes
Cannon, Clarence A., 1879-1964	4	Yes
Cannon, Clarence A., 1879-1964	4-175	
Clark, Champ, 1850-1921	51, 52	
Farley, James Aloysius, 1888-1976	4	Yes
Freeman, Orville Lothrop, 1918-2003	4	Yes
Gillett, Frederick H., 1851-1935	4	Yes
Green, Theodore Francis, 1867-1966	4	Yes
Kellett, Donald	4	Yes
Lemnitzer, Lyman L.	4	Yes
Longworth, Nicholas	4	Yes
Madden, Martin B.	4	Yes
Mann, James Robert, 1856-1922	4	Yes
McCormack, John W., 1891-1980	4	Yes
Missouri-Politics and government	5-175	
Presidents—United States	70, 78, 80, 89, 94, 95, 97, 101, 138, 162	
Rainey, Henry T., 1860-1934	4	Yes
Rayburn, Sam, 1882-1962	4	Yes
Reed, James Alexander, 1861-1944	4	Yes
Rickover, Hyman G., 1900-1986	4	Yes
Sabath, Adolph J., 1866-1952	4	Yes
Schooley, C. Herschel, 1900-1985	1-8, 17, 28, 29, 39, 43, 44, 46-48, 53-56, 82, 100, 107, 129, 152, 153, 176, 181-186	
Short, Dewey Jackson, 1898-1979	4	Yes
Steadman, Charles M.	4	Yes
Taber, John, 1880-1965	4	Yes
Truman, Harry S., 1884-1972	4	Yes
United States, Congress	5-175	
Van Ness family	178, 186	Yes
Van Ness, Harper Elliott, Jr., 1919-2007	178, 186	Yes
Van Ness, Harper Elliott, Jr., 1919-2007	176-186	